

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Morin-Bello, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee:

I am writing to express my support of S.B. No. 1064, H.B. No. 5004, S.J. No. 29, and H.J. No. 1. I also conditionally support S.B. No. 1057 and H.B. No. 6693.

I recently moved from Westport to Bridgeport. I am now in a community in which many adults work several jobs to make ends meet and must rely on public transportation. Their employment is not of the sort where they can take time off to vote. Many of these folks are the people who kept our hospitals and infrastructure functioning during the pandemic, often at great risk to themselves. I am excited to support measures that would increase their ability to have their voices heard via the ballot box.

The voters have spoken through referendum. It is now up to the legislature to codify their wishes into law by passing and funding bills that institute Early Voting (EV) in Connecticut, bringing our state in line with the vast majority of states that have already instituted such laws.

SB 1064 and HB 5004 have my full support. SB1057 has my conditional support. By increasing the EV window to at least two weeks that span two weekends, and including funding for voter education, it would receive my full endorsement.

I want to stress the importance of funding for voter education concerning changes to our voting laws. This is paramount if we are to make the most of nascent good policies.

I also fully endorse SJ 29 and HJ 1 concerning No Excuse Absentee Voting (NEAV). The temporary measure that allowed NEAV during the pandemic increased voter participation. This is the aim of a democracy that values each member of its community, and Connecticut, especially, should not lag behind in this aim. I am proud that our laws generally are some of the best for protecting the rights of its citizens. I hope by the close of this legislative session, our voting laws will do the same.

HB 6693 has my support in all but one aspect. I do not see any benefit to the voter, nor any necessity for, the public disclosure of absentee ballot applications. This strikes me

as a step towards diminishing the essential aspect of voter privacy. However, I strongly support a period of absentee ballot curing proposed in this bill.

I appreciate your concern on these matters and for allowing me the opportunity to express my sentiments to you.

Respectfully,
Deborah Howland-Murray
Brideport, CT